

A
S C O U R G E

FOR THE

DISSENTERS;

O R

NON-CONFORMITY UNMASKED.

SCOTT & BOWNE

NEW YORK

1880

A
S C O U R G E
FOR THE
DISSENTERS;

O R,
NON-CONFORMITY UNMASKED:

O C C A S I O N E D

By the Application intended to be made this
Sessions of Parliament, for the Repeal of
the CORPORATION and TEST ACTS.

With Animadversions on Dr. PRICE's Sermon,
preached at the *Old-Jewry* Meeting-House,
on the 4th of *November*, 1789.

In an ADDRESS to both HOUSES of PARLIAMENT.

By an *ECCLESIASTIC.*

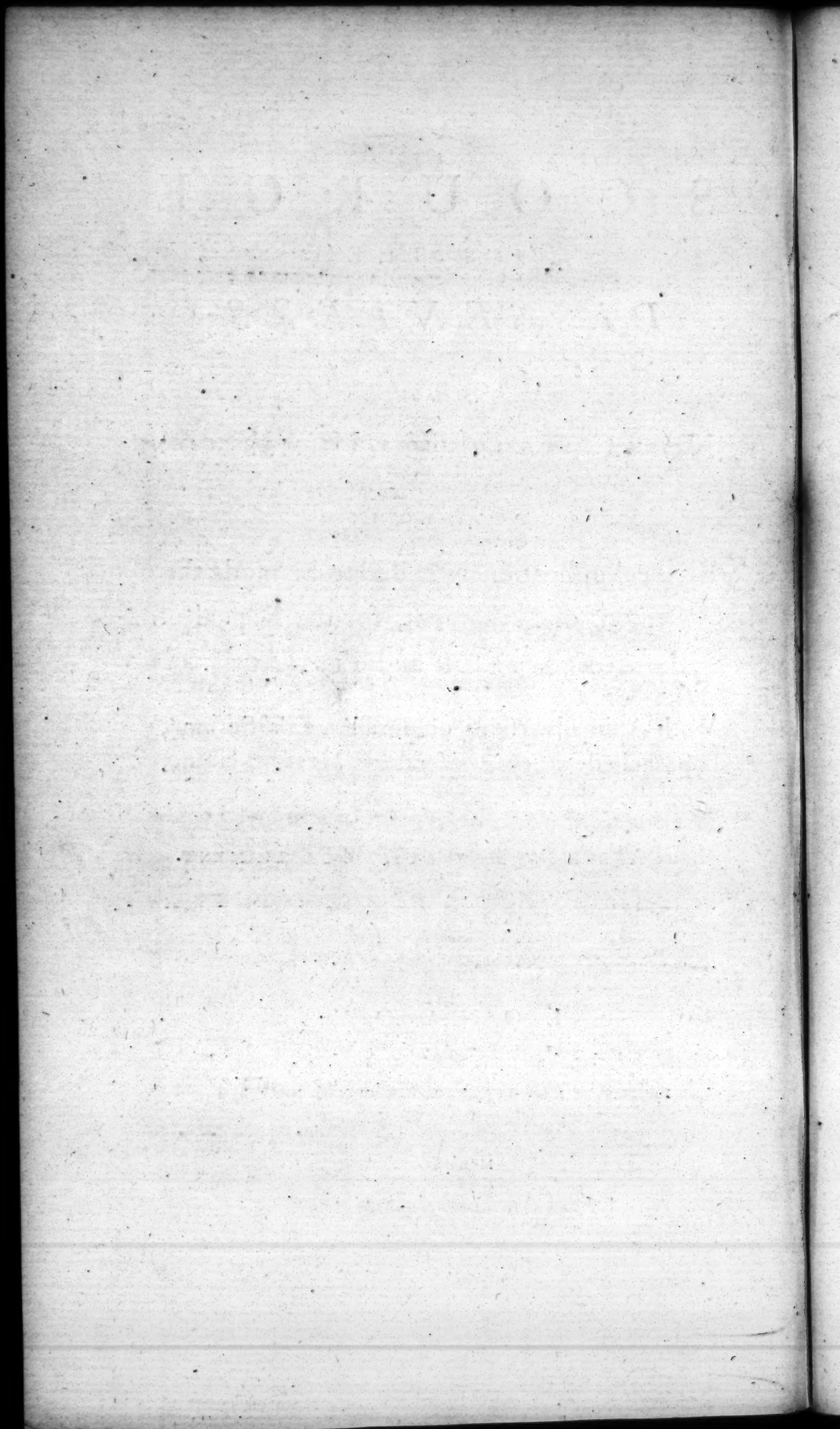
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A
S C O U R G E, &c.

My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,

THAT impatient, restless, and daring spirit of perseverance, which is in general the criterion of a bad cause, peculiarly distinguishes a considerable number of men in these kingdoms, who, for some reasons or other, choose to dissent from the Church of England, as by law established. Like diligent assailants, the time of your assembling in Parliament is no sooner made public, but they take their station in the field, as if a removal of their imaginary evils were of the first and the last importance, and had a

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right

right to supersede the much more weighty national concerns which call for your deliberation.

The straggling parties of these men dispersed throughout the kingdom, have not wasted the summer months in indolence; though they have apparently lain in ambush, they have occasionally sprung from concealment whenever a Member of Parliament has ventured into their neighbourhood, and have extorted from him a promise of support whenever their application should be renewed. This has been accompanied with threats of an alarming nature to those who wish to keep their seats in St. Stephen's Chapel, and the fear of losing that mark of honour and emolument, may have induced the most timid reluctantly to promise their support; as they must be well assured that the Dissenters of the present day have no one cause of real complaint.

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As the winter approached, their vigilance has been doubled; their strength has increased as the Fourth of November drew near—a day of days, and the beginning of months to the Non-Conformists. The year of the Christian commences on Advent-Sunday, because he does not measure his days or number his years so much by the motion of the sun as of his Saviour: but the year of Non-Conformity begins the Fourth of November, the day of their emancipation from all reasonable obligations, and their subjugation to the restraints of conscience and of law.

But, to be serious: the true state of the case cannot be fully ascertained, unless we look back to the various applications which have been made to Government by those who thought themselves aggrieved, and take notice of the several Acts of Parliament which have been passed to quell that spirit

of opposition to the laws, which has appeared in various shapes and on different occasions.

As soon as the Reformation from the errors and superstitions of the Church of Rome had obtained any footing in these kingdoms, a set of persons dissatisfied with the proceedings of our venerable Reformers, formed themselves into a body and opposed the Reformation, because it did not in every respect overthrow the established religion. They wanted a total alteration in every particular, right or wrong, and, in their blind zeal, would have annihilated Christianity itself, as well as the superstitions which had obtained in the Christian Church. Many of them, from an overheated imagination, would have destroyed the Christian worship, as they did the churches set apart for that purpose, in Scotland, especially; and have overthrown the piety which distinguished their ancestors,

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as they did the laborious efforts which they made to promote the service of God in our land. A better account of the design of these men cannot be given, than in that admirable burlesque, called the Tale of a Tub. The quarrels of the two brothers, Jack and Martin, about their father's will, admirably describe the contention which took place between our Reformers and the original Non-Conformists, both with respect to the doctrines and the discipline of the established church. Though the ingenious author of that performance may have treated the subject with too much levity, the case is stated with great impartiality, and the absurdity of the objections alluded to is very justly exposed.

During the reign of Elizabeth the Non-Conformists increased in numbers, from that spirit of innovation and opposition to which all restless minds are subject. The desire of
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being taken notice of is predominant with some men, especially amongst those who have neither wisdom nor riches to distinguish them. That opinion of self, which will not submit to the decisions of others, however well founded, wise, and judicious; that ambition of appearing to be of some consequence in the world; that discontented spirit that is not satisfied with a low humble state, but is ever aspiring after something great and consequential: if it cannot obtain its supreme wish in temporal affairs, will make religion subservient to the principal aim, and they will oppose the best and wisest decisions, rather than fail in the attempt. Surely no better motive can be assigned for opposing the best establishment in the world, the result of great wisdom, of nervous piety, and mature deliberation.

The opposition which the primitive Non-Conformists made to the Reformers, was

equal, at least, to that of the Papists themselves. They accused them of being such in their hearts, because they practised that wise moderation which was necessary at that period. Because they conformed to the Romanists in those things which were non-essential, and for the sake of peace complied with many rites and ceremonies, which are rather an advantage, than otherwise, to the respectable performance of divine worship. Because they did not in the madness of reformation strip off every ornament of the church, and not leave a decent vestige behind. And thus the Dissenters of that day did all they could to promote the cause of the Romanists, by their intemperate zeal, and implacable opposition to the first reformers.

In the succeeding reign, the Non-Conformists imagined that all their complaints would be removed, their grievances redressed, and that they should then sit in

Moses's

Moses's seat without molestation, or the fear of being ever removed. The crafty monarch seemed to espouse their cause in the beginning of his reign. As he had been educated amongst Presbyterians, they naturally placed great dependance on his promoting their interest to the utmost of his power; but alas! he was so well persuaded of the necessity of an hierarchy to support the state, that he adopted this as his favourite maxim: *No Bishop, no King!* all their hopes vanished speedily, and they were obliged to be satisfied with the removal of a few inconsiderable grievances without attaining their aim, the full discovery of which was reserved for a future period.

Though they could not obtain the utmost stretch of their wishes, they put in full practice those privileges that were granted them. They embraced every opportunity of increasing the number of the disaffected to the
Church

Church and State. They trained up their children in the principles of Non-Conformity, and made them essentially necessary to their salvation; and they assured their offspring that the reformation was only Popery in disguise. The Arminians and Calvinists had frequent and violent disputes, and the King himself engaged in the controversy. There are several theological productions of his Majesty still extant, which are the result of his education among the professed followers of Calvin. But he was wise enough to see that the form of government proposed by that great promoter of Predestination, was inconsistent with a monarchy, however limited; that a republic was their favourite government, and that the moment he abolished the hierarchy, his own kingdom would shake. As he was very fond of the pageantry and state, as well as the power and authority attendant upon crowned heads, and was pleased with the adulation of court

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sycophants,

hypocrites, he did all in his power to support the establishment in Church as well as in the State, knowing that the one was necessarily dependent upon the other.

The tragic history of the first Charles is no other than a narrative of the triumph of the saints, and by them styled the Millennium itself. Many of them imagined that Jesus Christ reigned upon earth in the person of their idol Oliver Cromwell, who was in every respect their proper governor, calculated to reign over those who made hypocrisy the standard of all their actions, would compass sea and land to attain their purposes, and were guilty of the most atrocious actions under the plausible pretext, that good might come.

The murder of the King's favourites, Strafford and Laud, paved the way for all the scenes of rapine, rebellion, false doctrine,

trine, heresy, and schism, which stain the annals of that nefarious usurpation. With Charles the First fell every blessing dear to Englishmen—the house of lords was extirpated—the bench of bishops annihilated—the code of laws altered, and the will of the Usurper made the only standard of equity. All the ministers of the established church were silenced who would not conform to the doctrine and discipline of Cromwell. Presbyterians and Independents occupied all the pulpits. The established clergy were left without any provision, and those patterns of learning and piety were left to languish in loathsome jails, where it was dangerous for their friends to visit them, lest they should be deemed enemies to the government of the usurper, who was very cautious of maintaining that authority which he had acquired by wading through the blood of his King, and multitudes of his fellow-subjects.

These were the blessed effects of opposition to the established church. However the friends of Non-Conformity may varnish over the conduct of their progenitors, and assign other reasons for their proceedings, the candid amongst them must acknowledge that this total overthrow of men and measures originated with opposition to episcopacy; that religious disputes terminated in political ones; and that every considerate man must perceive, that not only the blood, but the spirit of the Oliverians continue with unabated ardour in their descendants amongst the moderns.

Notwithstanding the Non-Conformists had gained their point, had seized the emoluments of the church, filled all the offices in the state, during the usurpation of Oliver, they could not yet agree about religious matters. Some were for the exercise of church discipline in one way, some in another; some
would

would use the Lord's-Prayer, others would not, as they disliked forms of every sort; some objected to this prayer of our Saviour's, because it supplicates for the establishment of his kingdom; and they objected to all government but that of a common-wealth, and they actually substituted these words instead of the others—"thy common-wealth come:" others were for bringing in the most damnable doctrines, and would have introduced a system of blasphemy into the church, if such it could be called. In short, the few years that Oliver sat in the seat of judgment, were remarkable for the introduction of all the heresies with which the world was ever cursed, and exhibited that scene of confusion, which must ever be the case, when there is no proper establishment, mildly enforced by salutary laws. The baleful effects we feel at this day! what millions of sectarists, who differ from and abuse each other, do our eyes behold! how is the true religion of
Christ

Christ depressed in our time! how do the enemies of his mild government triumph in their opposition, waiting for the return of those halcyon days, when every cobbler who was inspired, received imposition of hands, and when it was a necessary qualification to know how to make a pulpit, before he dared to preach in one! This only is prevented by the continuance of our excellent ecclesiastical establishment. The present applicants do not say what they mean, they labour under no one real grievance, yet to keep up the farce they have abundance of imaginary oppressions; take care then, my Lords, that the only barrier left us, is not broken down; that an inundation of the same doctrines and the same practice does not again disgrace our land. I conjure you, my Lords and Gentlemen, to do all in your power to keep the King on his throne and the Bishops on their seats.

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At length, however, Cromwell died, and with him ended the triumph of the saints, as they called themselves; what they really were, I leave others to determine. Prayers without ceasing were offered up for the preservation of the usurper's life, as on it depended every thing they held dear; and many of them were assured, as by a voice from Heaven, that many years would be added to his life. But it was not the God of Hezekiah which gave this answer, neither did the shadow of the sun go back at all; no plaster of figs, no outward nor inward application availed in the least for his recovery; the prayers and the supplications of the saints were neither heard nor answered. God arose in judgment upon the usurper, and those who supported his cause; for it was high time to defend his own. Zion had mourned and languished in the most wretched captivity long enough, the garments of her priests were stripped off; her harps had been un-

strung,

strung, and suspended on the willows of dismay; and all her language was, "Arise, O Lord, and avenge thy own cause." The Lord heard and answered, and the God of Jacob regarded.

With Charles II. returned those blessings, the loss of which had long, though in vain, been deplored; the restoration of the Church and the State took place with that of the King; and to this day we express our gratitude as we experience the advantage. The established clergy were replaced, and more than two thousand Non-Conformists ejected from our pulpits. The lawful owners were restored to their livings, those excepted who sunk under the hands of oppression, died in jails, and others on beds of languishment.

It may reasonably be supposed that a violent clamour was raised by the Puritans, on

account of the silencing so many of their leaders, and their being turned into the wide world, without any visible means of support. They either forgot, or did not choose to remember, that the established clergy were discarded in the same manner when the usurpation commenced, and that this was nothing but a restitution to the lawful owners. Persecution for righteousness sake was their resource and consolation, and the *holy harmless* ministers were obliged to give way to wolves in sheep's clothing, who had no other sanction for exercising the priest's office than that of the great whore of Babylon. Thus they stigmatized the reformed, the learned, the pious clergy of these realms, in those days, and thus they stigmatize their descendants in the present. The same spirit prevails amongst them, and they are trying every method of obtaining the same power, as they possess the same inclination.

State policy rendered it necessary to stop the mouths of the discarded ministers, lest they should again disseminate opposition to the government, and re-accomplish its overthrow; but this occasioned such a disturbance amongst them, that in process of time it was found expedient to let them preach in meeting-houses, under various legal restrictions. This indulgence was the result of frequent deliberations between the Episcopalians and the Non-Conformists. Meeting-houses were legally opened in several parts of this city and country, and those who were ejected from the Church pulpits, preached and prayed in conventicles. They endured much opposition from government, and many of them were fined and imprisoned for their disorderly conduct. They could not brook submission, who had before been in the seat of power, they put all opposition down to the score of conscience, imagining that they were doing God service,

and

and asserted that their enemies, were the enemies of God and of his Christ.

The reign of James the Second was not more favourable to the Non-Conforming interest; as it remained subject to the same restrictions. Their principal ministers could not help inveighing against the Prelates as Papists in their hearts, and they were often cited before the courts of judicature as guilty of sedition. The supreme power was unwilling to let go its proper authority, and would not suffer the Non-Conformists again to bind their kings in chains, nor their nobles in fetters of iron. The memory of former proceedings were too recent; the calamities the nation then endured were of too much consequence to be renewed. These debates had nothing to do with the design of the King to re-establish Popery, that was entirely foreign to the dispute between the Ecclesiastics and the Dissenters; in that

respect the King opposed Churchmen as well as Puritans, which proves that this dispute was totally different,

At length James abdicated the throne of his ancestors, and the Prince and Princess of Orange succeeded to the dominion of these realms. Many subjects of the empire still adhered to their old master, but the Non-Conformists to a man swore allegiance to the Prince and Princess of Orange, together with others who objected to the late proceedings of James. The Non-Conformists assailed the throne before the new governors had taken their seats upon it. The most fulsome adulations were paid to William and Mary, as though they were the peculiar delegates of heaven, the vicegerents of the Deity, and (to use their own words) “ As
“ the sun ascending the horizon dispels the
“ darkness of the night, their serene pre-
“ sence has chased away the darkness that
“ invaded

"invaded us," But it will not answer any valuable purpose to repeat their panegyrics, nor enter upon the antiquated disputes respecting the blessings of this important revolution.

Notwithstanding the sanguine expectations of Dissenters, followed up by every species of art and cunning that the imagination of man could invent, and the utmost exertion of their power, they could not obtain the extent of their demands. They were shackled with an obligation to subscribe all the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, before they were allowed to preach in public; they were subject to many penal laws, and that *grievous oppression* under which they groan to the present day, a sacramental test, before they were qualified to hold any office in the state, however low and insignificant, as it was binding on all, from a lord-chancellor to a fifty pound clerk in any of the public

public offices, and included every civil and military employment. This, though chiefly complained of by Protestant Dissenters, is equally binding on men of all persuasions, Roman Catholics, &c. &c. together with many others, more calamitous than ever the Non-Conformists had to complain of, and to the removal of which they are greater enemies than the Ecclesiastics themselves. They wish that others may continue bound, so they go free; witness their unwarrantable opposition to the Quebec act, and the later acts which have passed in favour of Roman Catholics; witness the late Dissenters mob, headed by Lord G. Gordon, a Presbyterian, and the devastations they committed; witness their insulting the bench of bishops particularly, and the many fires kindled in the metropolis by Sectarists, the agents of their brethren and abettors, the Americans on the other side of the water.

But

But to return from this short digression: the succeeding monarchs have almost uniformly maintained the same conduct towards the Dissenters, who have sometimes been peaceable, and sometimes otherwise, just as they imagined the crowned heads were disposed to favour their cause or not. The reign of Queen Anne was chequered by the support, and the opposition of the Non-Conformists, according to the espousal of their principles, under the denomination of Tory or of Whig. They suffered no molestation under the reigns of any of the Hanoverian race, and during a late unfortunate administration, which they opposed to the utmost of their power, they made a desperate exertion for the removal of their remaining obstacles to the possession of place, power, and dominion. Though Lord North knew they were his determined enemies, yet such was the philanthropy of his heart, that he allowed them every indulgence that could

reasonably be desired, took off their obligation to subscribe such articles as they did not believe, and put them upon such an easy footing, that his Lordship, and all reasonable men in the kingdom imagined that Parliament would never more be pestered with any of their applications.

But Non-Conformists are not so easily satisfied; they suffered the matter to continue dormant for some years, and behold them again in the field, marshalling their forces, and attacking your Lordships, and the Commons of this kingdom, without mercy, and I may add, without reason. I do not at all regard the string of resolutions published by the chairman; nor the comparison between the national assembly of France and that of this kingdom. I know it is a matter of triumph to the Dissenters, and they plead their example as worthy our imitation. The case bears no kind of parallel. They are
emerging

emerging from the shackles of despotism and real slavery; we have done so a long since, and enjoy all that happiness and liberty, which any reasonable subject can require. They have imprisoned their King and Queen, and I doubt not some restless spirits in this kingdom would wish to do the same; otherwise we should not hear one of the Enthusiasts of their party exclaim on this occasion, "Lord, now let-
 "test thou thy servant depart in peace,
 "mine eyes having seen thy salvation;" or in other words, "I see two crowned heads
 "in confinement already, God grant I may
 "live to see a few more. Then my wishes will
 "be completed. I can now almost desire
 "to depart, and I shall then do so entirely.
 "Thy salvation will then be perfect, when
 "all the kings and kingdoms of this world
 "are destroyed, and the reign of the saints
 "re-commence in the persons of those who
 "are the most proper to govern."

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Suppose

Suppose for a moment (but God forbid the supposition should ever take place) suppose that the Non-Conformists gained their point, and that every impediment to their attainment of power in the state were taken out of the way ; suppose the Corporation and Test Acts were repealed, and the inhabitants of Otaheite were duly qualified to represent any of our counties in parliament ; not that I imagine they would be the most dangerous of our rulers ; if such an event took place, what step would next be taken for the abolition of Church government, and the introduction of those heresies which they professedly espouse ; these are principally Arianism and Socinianism. Common decency would require a temporary cessation, but I know not what the triumph of success would prompt them to. As the inferior clergy have complained of the inequality of Church preferment ; that they have done all the duty, and dignitaries run away with all the emolument :

lument : in this complaint the Dissenters have unanimously joined; glad of embracing every opportunity of wounding the Church, they do it even in the house of her friends. Suffer me to ask if the former conduct of the Non-Conformists does not justify the apprehension that they will excite the curates to apply to parliament for a redress of grievances—for an equalization of livings—for relief in the matter of subscription to the articles. If this meets with success, not a vestige of our excellent establishment will be left behind. The door will be thrown wide open, the boundaries destroyed, and as the prophet pathetically laments respecting Jerusalem, “ The wild boar out of the woods doth waste it, and all that go by pluck her pleasant fruits.”

I hope I shall be pardoned for making one more digression, especially as it is not totally irrelevant to the subject in hand. Notwithstanding the complaints universally

made of the bad provision for the inferior clergy, and that the press groans with abuse of the Church dignitaries for rolling in affluence, whilst those who do the duty are starving; how comes it to pass that so many applications are constantly made to the bishops for ordination, and that many more by hundreds every year than can be admitted. I apprehend that the real cause of the want of employment amongst the inferior clergy, arises from the number who are ordained on false titles, who consequently must be destitute very soon after their ordination is over. As a remedy for this expedient, I should propose a cessation of ordaining till those are employed who are already ordained, unless a candidate brings a presentation to a living. Perhaps it would be for the future good of the Church established, if none were to be ordained to the sacred office, who had not either immediately a presentation to a living, or remotely, after the death of the present incumbent. But this I leave to the

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the consideration of the Lords Spiritual, and only suggest it as the probable mean of removing a grievance complained of with too much justice,

I address myself particularly to the episcopal bench. Your Lordships are seated in parliament for the conservation of the Church's rights, and that no heresy, schism, nor innovation, might take place in an establishment without doubt the best that obtains in Christendom. The education of your Lordships, who were nurtured in the very bosom of our holy mother, must impress an indelible attachment to her interest and real welfare, independent of the honourable and lucrative situations to which you are exalted. Some of your Lordships owe that exaltation to the splendour of your abilities, which were so dazzling, that the chief magistrate of the state could not fail to raise you to the highest stations in the Christian

Christian Church, as a reward for your piety, learning, and loyalty. One of your Lordships in particular, has been elevated very lately, who had no expectation of such advancement, as he had none of those introductory aids which generally lead to such distinguished preferment. His successful opposition to an arch heretic, at least, if not an heresiarch of our day, deserved every distinction; the penetrating eye of the Lord-Chancellor easily discerned his merit, and in consequence aided his promotion. He has already stood forth the avowed champion of this remaining privilege of our Church, the exclusion of all her enemies from an advancement to posts of honour or emolument in the state. However the malignity of some men may lead them to abuse his Lordship, by the opprobrious epithets with which the Non-Conformists always bespatter Ecclesiastics, he will constantly be revered by the true friends of the Church, and, I trust,

trust, his recommendation will be attended to, by every clergyman in his diocese. May his Lordship live to see the result of his wife and manly interposition, by the full exposure of the enemies of the Church, and behold Jerusalem in prosperity all his life long.

I presume to call upon your Lordships for the full exertion of your abilities on this distinguished occasion; I hope none will disgrace his order by a tame acquiescence with the views of the Non-Conformists, nor stain his lawn, by giving any sanction to this petulant and artful application: for, my Lords, should they succeed, the mitre will tremble on your heads; it is the most effectual step to the abolition of the hierarchy, and the re-introduction of those men and doctrines into our pulpits, which were once their disgrace, their scandal, and their curse.

Some

Some men object to the reception of the holy sacrament, as a necessary qualification for sustaining any office in the state, and say it is a profanation of that sacred ordinance. I cannot agree with them in the propriety of this objection, because I think it a necessary qualification for any officer of state, that he should be a *Christian*: if he serves a Christian Prince, it is in my opinion, indispensable, that he be himself under the influence of the same principles, in order to render him a faithful servant. Therefore, as it is necessary that the officers of state should not be Mahometans, Jews, nor Infidels; and as the reception of the sacrament is binding upon all good Christians, in obedience to the commandment of their great Master; as no one can be a good Christian who does not communicate frequently, and no one can be a good servant of the crown who is not a good Christian, where is the
impropriety

impropriety of making this a proper test of admission?

But they further object and say:—"The ordinance is undoubtedly profaned by this appointment, because bad men are admitted who make no scruple about any thing, and are totally unfit for receiving the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ. The established ministers are subjected to a heavy grievance, by admitting improper persons to the communion, and their holy office disgraced by this shameful compliance."

To this plausible objection I reply, the State cannot be answerable for the conduct of individuals; it cannot possibly scrutinize the actions of men so far as to determine who is a proper communicant or not; this would be attempting an inquisition, indeed, more severe than that of Portugal or Spain. Therefore, this being the case, the person

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himself

himself is entirely to blame, who receives the sacrament as a qualification for an office, when he knows he is not properly qualified to receive the sacrament. By this institution he is rather led to such a reflection as this : —“ I am graciously appointed by his Majesty to such a place of trust and confidence ; “ that I may be properly qualified for it, the “ laws enjoin that I should renew my engagements with God, before I attempt to serve “ my country ; that I may always remember “ the terms of my admission were such, and “ that this may influence my conduct during “ the whole time I am continued in this “ place of importance.” This is a full defence of the good design of government in making this wise and salutary law.

To the second objection, the reply is easy. What possible grievance can be imposed on the Clergyman who officiates ? It is not his business to search the heart, nor can

he possibly be acquainted with the secret motives of those who come to the holy communion ; it is his duty to explain the nature of it ; to enforce the qualifications necessary ; and to exhort his hearers to a frequent participation. Those who come to the sacrament profess their penitence for past transgressions, their promise of future amendment, their love to God, and their charity to men. Can any Clergyman consistently refuse any one the sacrament, who makes these professions ? certainly not. The person himself is alone answerable ; the minister sustains no grievance. If the communicant be a good man, his goodness is thereby strengthened ; if he be a bad one, he is instructed to become better, and professes that he means to be so.

I hope I shall be permitted in my turn to ask, whether it be not a greater profanation of the sacrament, for those men to partake of it, who professedly deny the Lord that

bought them; who degrade the Saviour in his person, to that of a mere man; a humble teacher sent from God; and deny the efficacy of his atonement for the redemption of the world? And yet these very men start at the profanation of the sacrament! Where, in the name of common sense, can be the profanation of commemorating the sufferings of a man like ourselves; whose death and sacrifice were no more available for the salvation of mankind, than that of the sacrifices under the law of Moses? Can any one with the smallest degree of patience endure the impudence and effrontery of modern Socinians, to hear one of those heretics himself declare in a late republican sermon, which deserves to be in no other hands than those of the common hangman, gravely declare, "That it is a public iniquity to convert an ordinance, appointed by our Saviour to commemorate his death, into an instrument of oppressive policy, and
 " a qua-

“ a qualification of rakes and atheists for
 “ civil posts.” I appeal to the candid and
 dispassionate who have read my statement
 of the case, and this assertion of the repub-
 lican, whether the latter is not guilty of the
 grossest misrepresentation, and an abuse of
 a law made on purpose to exclude such dis-
 contented schismatics as himself from having
 any share in the legislature.

But now I have mentioned this celebrated
 performance, celebrated not for any literary
 or moral excellence, but only amongst
 our modern politicians, so far as to have
 gone rapidly through several editions; there
 are other parts of this redoubtable publica-
 tion which I cannot suffer to pass without
 the most determined and pointed censure.
 Surely in this publication the liberty of the
 press is arrived at its utmost height, and no
 man can complain that he lives in a land where
 he cannot write and print what he pleases.
 What a pity it is that his actions are at all
 restrained,

restrained, that this modern Calculator, American, Patriot, Republican, whatever you please to call him, that he has not power equal to his wishes; that he has no opportunity of telling the King to his face, “ Sir, “ I consider you as my servant, and if you “ do not obey me and the public, I will “ turn you off and appoint another. I will “ hurl you from your throne the very moment you refuse our application; you are “ only fit to govern slaves; if you do not “ listen to my dictates, I will let you know “ with whom you have to do.”

Has not Lord G. Gordon the utmost reason to complain of his long confinement for libelling the Queen of France, when such men as these are suffered to libel the best of Kings, and are suffered to undermine by sly insinuation, and inveigh, with the greatest illiberality, the best constitution upon earth. Are our governors asleep, or do they fear to bring

bring the wretch to punishment, lest he should fan the flame of opposition to such a degree as to excite another rebellion, the supreme wish of all discontented republicans, who are constantly labouring after this very thing.

It is certain, that the man who calls James the First a fool, for opposing the extravagant claims of the Non-Conformists of his days, would do so to the face of George the Third; and I wonder that he did it not, as I am told he had the impudence to go to court soon after the publication of his fanatical, levelling, abusive pamphlet, sent into the world under the appellation of a sermon; preached to the descendants of Cromwell, and applauded by all modern Puritans, especially by those who make the present application to parliament; the professed advocates for the majesty of
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the mob, to whom alone they consider themselves subject.

I now appeal to you who are the hereditary representatives of these kingdoms, and you who are so by the election of your constituents, whether there is not the greatest reason to suspect the design of those who frequently make applications to you on this behalf. From the conduct of their forefathers and themselves, what else can we expect? Aiming at power without the necessary qualification, what tie will bind them when they have attained the summit of their wishes. Released from the restraints of religion, what law will enforce their obedience? Ask of the days that are past, and learn experience by the things this nation once suffered.

Evil men and seducers wax worse and
worse;

worse; if privileges are granted to the discontented and seditious, they only serve as a plea for obtaining more. The original claims of the Dissenters have, by degrees, been granted; as they desired, they have been permitted to worship God agreeable to the dictates of their own consciences: they objected to the use of the gown, hood, and surplice, as so many vestiges of Popery, and have preached in cloaks in their stead: they said that standing was the most proper posture for prayer, though our Church, in compliance with the sacred command, thought it right *to fall down and kneel before the Lord, our Maker*: and because they could not shew sufficient contempt to all the ceremonies of the Church and her modes of worship, they would contradict for contradiction's sake; the Reformed-Church thought the most reverend manner of receiving the Eucharist was that of kneeling, and gave directions to that purpose; when, forsooth, the Dissenters

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would

would sit down to receive that holy sacrament; our Ecclesiastical Rulers, ever willing to grant their requests, for peace sake, complied with this also. The Dissenters, to a man, objected to the use of forms of prayer, and they were permitted to make use of their extemporaneous effusions, however wild, frantic, or absurd, insomuch that some of them are remarked, not only for the indecency, but for the profaneness of their addresses to the Deity. In short, in doctrine and in practice, they have been permitted not only to believe what they please, but also (by some late indulgencies, if they may be so called, though I cannot but think them very improper) to disseminate heresy and schism in the most public manner; and to spread them by publications from the press, lest those from the pulpit should be insufficient. In consequence of this unreasonable indulgence, they have degraded the Son of God, by asserting that he is nothing more than
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man, though they will allow him to have been a very good one; nay, they may be guilty of the unpardonable sin themselves, may blaspheme the person and work of the Holy Ghost, if they please, and teach others to do so too.

All these things are allowed them, and many more, too numerous for recapitulation; and now, their consciences are again disturbed; they cannot be satisfied without places of power, trust, and emolument; some have proved themselves such able calculators, that they imagine themselves qualified for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer; some such incomparable negociators, that they want embassies to settle commercial treaties; some such powerful preachers, that a conventicle is too small a place for exertion, and St. Paul's Church much better calculated for their pulpit declamations. Having gained every religious privilege, they now aspire to the sword

of the magistrate and the senatorial robe; to answer this obvious purpose, to introduce the creed of Socinus into the Church, and the government of Calvin into the State, to exchange the pure doctrines of the Reformation for heresy and schism, and a limited monarchy for that of a republic.

We cannot take up a newspaper in a coffee-house, without perceiving advertisements, announcing the meeting of the Non-Conformists in various parts of the kingdom, and publishing the various *unanimous* resolutions of these *respectable* and *loyal* members of society: one column of these vehicles of intelligence is occupied with the various reasons urged against the diabolical acts of parliament, which exclude them from power and emolument: they all declare their profound loyalty to the State, and, as a proof of it, they refer to the years 1715 and 1745, when their forefathers opposed

posed the pretensions of the Stuarts to the throne of these realms. In this they acted with all that cunning and caution for which they have been justly remarked in every æra of Non-Conformity; do they now, or did they then complain of being chastised with whips; they had the utmost reason to expect the lash of the scorpion, if a Prince of the Romish persuasion was their governor, They may with the utmost reason wish well to the house of Hanover, as under its lenient sway they have been indulged beyond all bounds, have met with no kind of persecution for conscience-sake, have increased in numbers and in wealth, and notwithstanding the remaining barrier, have crept into several offices, by occasional conformity, and actually have the majority in many corporations.

I cannot but think that it makes much against the loyalty and submission of Dissenters, that they are obliged to go so far
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back for vouchers, and that the younger brethren among them can bring no proof of their attachment to our government. The reign and measures of George III. or rather those of his ministers, have been peculiarly marked by the opposition of the Dissenters. The American war affords many notable instances of this sort; their brethren, the American Non-Conformists, were the chief promoters of that unnatural rebellion, and their relations on this side the water, did all in their power to promote the common cause. Suppose for a moment, that any political madman had been hardy enough to erect the American standard in the metropolis, who would have been the first to flock to it; doubtless those who have manifested their opposition and disloyalty to government by every mean in their power, and are still ready to do the same.

I think myself fully justified in declaring
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my suspicion, that the first object with the Dissenters would be, could they get the power of the State into their own hands, or a majority in Parliament, the extirpation of our Clergy, and the abolition of Episcopacy. What was the conduct of the Non-Conforming Americans? The Episcopal Clergy, to a man, fled from their presence, they left their preferment and property behind, preferring their lives and liberties to the possession of both. With the loyal American Clergy, the metropolis swarmed, without money, without preferment: I fear to anticipate the day when our streets will again be crowded with the Episcopal Clergy, equally destitute!

Having alluded to the years 1715 and 1745, famous for the attempts of an unfortunate and imprudent Prince to reascend the throne of his ancestors, and for the designs of the Roman Catholics in the re-

establishment of their laws and liberties, I cannot help comparing the conduct of the Papists with that of the Dissenters. Whatever their design may have been, their success has been very different, and upon the whole of their conduct, when compared, I cannot help thinking that a Romish Non-Conformist is a better friend to our constitution than a Protestant one. The Romanists only attempted the re-establishment of their religion, and a very few of them designed to replace their Prince on the throne. The Dissenters murdered their lawful sovereign, destroyed the monarchy, and extirpated the Church; they enthroned an Usurper, filled our pulpits with Presbyterians and Independents, and put the execution of our laws into the hands of men totally unqualified for that important office. As a proof that the same spirit prevails amongst them, there is hardly a Non-Conformist existing who does not sneer at the observation of the 30th of January; who does not wish
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it to be exchanged for a festival, and the 29th of May for a fast. How many to this day eat calves heads on the 30th of January, as a proof of their attachment to the *amiable* proceedings of their *virtuous and pious* forefathers.

But I must draw towards a conclusion, lest the Right Honourable and Honourable to whom I address myself, should be weary in attending to the subject; I will only make a few remarks, and at present trouble your Lordships no further.

From the hopes the Dissenters entertain of success, encouraged by the result of former applications, they begin to be confident, and to talk big. The small majority of the division against them in the House of Commons last year, warrants their most sanguine expectation. I hope sincerely that my Lord North, who has gloriously distin-

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guished himself on similar occasions, will again stand forth the avowed champion of reason, religion, and the Church established; that he will not desert the cause he has nobly undertaken; and that the sincere well-wishers to our establishment will on this occasion unite in rejecting an application fraught with the greatest calamities this country can possibly dread. To their hopes of success the Dissenters add threatenings.

News-Papers under their influence assure you in so many words, "If the Dissenters do not succeed this Session in their application to Parliament for a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, they will assemble in London next summer, to draw up a solemn appeal to the nation on the injustice of the legislature." What the result of such an assembly will be, no one can at present foresee, though they must dread; their number must amount to millions at least,

who can easily liberate Lord George Gordon, as he will be of great service to them on this occasion. Educated a Presbyterian himself, he will, no doubt, heartily join in their measures, as we cannot suppose that his late conversion to the Jewish religion, has increased his affection for the established Church. What a notable display! — A place larger than St. George's Fields must be appropriated for their rendezvous; a numberless multitude of Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Muggletonians, Swedenburgians, New-Light-Men, Sandemanians, and the various motley description of modern Schismatics, aided by the Turks and Infidels of all names and nations, with Lord George Gordon at their head, with a beard as long as Aaron's, and Jewish priests sounding the horns of sedition, in his train. The walls which used to surround this metropolis are removed already, or surely they would fall on this

occasion. The year 1790 will doubtless answer as well for riots and disturbances as the year 1780, and the madness of the multitude will, no doubt, be as unrestrained, especially as they will have the same cause to promote, and are found fighting on the *Lord's side*.

The Dissenters already rejoice with unspeakable joy at the ascendancy of the mob in Paris, that the laws are administered by the populace, and have in conformity with their sentiments addressed the National Assembly. They unanimously think that another revolution here is necessary; that we are but half reformed. This is the subject of their conversation at every convivial meeting; they drink prosperity to another revolution when in their cups, as well as when they are sober, and I suppose when they pray in secret, if they can bear to be alone, this is the subject of their petitions.

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In consequence of this address, I expect myself no small share of abuse. The Jews themselves were never more eager for obtaining a repeal of those Acts of Parliament which are really oppressive, than the Non-Conformists for that of those which are only so in imagination. It is said that they bribed high for the passing of their Bill in the reign of George the Second, and I have no doubt that the Non-Conformists, some of them, as rich as Jews, and perhaps obtained by the same worthy methods, would expend considerable sums, rather than not accomplish this supreme wish of their hearts. I have no doubt it will be said that I am myself a pampered Ecclesiastic, and that I zealously plead for the Church's rights, lest I should be a sufferer. Whether I am credited or not, I assure you that the highest preferment I ever attained in the Church, was a curacy of forty pounds per annum, united to a lectureship of fifty pounds, and that I
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hold neither at present, as I resigned both when I came to the metropolis, where I have no ecclesiastical preferment. It cannot, therefore, with any propriety be said, that I speak from interested motives, but solely from a sincere attachment to our establishment in Church and State, both of which I conceive, as I have repeatedly asserted, are in manifest danger if these claims are allowed. If I have expressed myself with too much asperity, I am sure I am warranted by the daring language of some of the Dissenters ; and I cannot but wonder at the clemency of the present administration, for suffering their publications to pass unnoticed. This is a fair, candid, ingenuous state of the case. I have not wilfully misrepresented any transactions. I did design to make some quotations from South, Swift, and Warburton, respecting the application made by Dissenters in their days, and to have compared them with the present ; but I
feared

feared giving offence, if I adopted the asperity of their language. This I have studiously avoided, and if any are offended, I am not to blame, but themselves only, who act in so unbecoming, so daring, and presumptuous a manner.

I have the honour to be, with the deepest submission and respect,

My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient

And devoted servant,

The AUTHOR.

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transcribing others, I have adopted the style
of their language. This I have done
only to avoid, and if any are offended, I
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ceeding in a manner.

I have the pleasure to be with the
subscribers and friends.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most obedient

and devoted servant

THE AUTHOR

